

33rd Salon d'Automne: Statement of the Jury

The jury of the 33rd Salon d'Automne is very pleased with the large number of submissions, which were quite diverse – this diversity continues to be manifest in the 31 selected works.

The obstruction of Lebanon's political horizon appears to have played a role in enhancing, if not inducing, a tendency in the *submissions* to the Salon to fall back on the subject *or* the individual, the former mostly through the portrait (a welcome endeavor), the latter sometimes through a simplistic reduction of politics to the mere accusation of a politician.

The jury noted a significant number of works that dealt with the traces of the temporal processes of decay and disintegration; these works were not satisfied with merely documenting or criticizing the polluted conditions in which we live but instead intentionally exposed themselves to these conditions, exploring their effects through sophisticated protocols. In these works, paint drips, pigments transform, moss and rust cover their surfaces as they react to a polluted environment. Additionally, other works were concerned with the signs of language, persistently coding and decoding virtual worlds.

The jury also noted the almost complete absence of works that deal with recent regional events/disasters/debacles/sequelae.¹ Why is that? Is it that it is too early for any of the latter to be integrated into an artwork, for example, because there has not been enough time for one to forget it and then for it to nonetheless return?² Or is it because artworks,³ films, and books may take many years to be completed⁴ – if either of the aforementioned two possibilities is the case, then we may discover in later Museum of Sursock Salons artworks that engage the aforementioned events/disasters/debacles/sequelae and that began prior to this Salon. Or is it that almost none of those who submitted work to the Salon are concerned with this region and not solely with Lebanon – would that have been induced, paradoxically, by the obstruction of Lebanon's political horizon?

¹ For example, the Battle of Mosul (2016-2017), which led to the liberation of Iraq's second most populous city from the self-proclaimed Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), in control of it since June 2014; the continued widespread devastation in Syria; the despondency of many Egyptian artists concerning their country's present state following the *becoming-revolutionary* (Deleuze) and *the rebirth of history* (Badiou) that took place in Tahrir Square in January-February 2011; not to mention the war on and in Yemen or the deteriorating situation in Palestine.

² Rilke: "And it is not yet enough to have memories [one should add here: and (post-traumatic) amnesias]. You must be able to forget them ... and you must have the immense patience to wait until they return. For the memories themselves [one should add here: and the (post-traumatic) amnesias] are not important. Only when they have changed into our very blood, into glance and gesture, and are nameless, no longer to be distinguished from ourselves [one should add here: and from (at least some) others] – only then can it happen that in some very rare hour the first word of a poem arises in their midst and goes forth from them."

³ Duchamp worked on the quiet for two decades on *Étant donnés*.

⁴ This is all the more the case when an event (the 1967 Arab defeat, May 68, etc.) occurs during the process of writing the book or making the artwork or film, inducing the artist or filmmaker or thinker to feel that the form that they used before is no longer adequate and leading to experimentation of a new form.